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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 2 October 1992, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. MOUMIN (Vice-President)	(Comoros)
later:	Mr. GANEV (President)	(Bulgaria)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho

Statements made by

Mr. Yahia (Tunisia)
Mr. Chammas (Lebanon)

Address by Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MAJOR-GENERAL ELIAS PHISOANA RAMAEMA, CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho His Excellency Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. RAMAEMA (Lesotho): On behalf of the Lesotho delegation, and on my own account, I wish first and foremost, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. It is indeed a deserved acknowledgement of your personal attributes, as well as eloquent recognition of the important role that your country has always played in world affairs.

I cannot but also seize this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia for the dedication and competence with which he conducted the deliberations of the forty-sixth session.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

We are proud to see at the helm of our Organization an eminent son of Africa, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. We warmly congratulate him on his well deserved election to the office of Secretary-General. His achievements to date are a source of satisfaction and pride to us all.

We share in the joy of welcoming to the family of nations all the new Member States. Their presence within our ranks is a further fulfilment of the principle of universality of the United Nations.

The forty-seventh session of the General Assembly has begun against a backdrop of renewed confidence in the ability of the United Nations to facilitate the resolution of a vast array of problems facing humanity. Thanks to the demise of the cold war and the debilitating Power-bloc politics of old, the inherent dynamic of the United Nations has been unleashed, giving reason for optimism that the Organization is now poised to assume a major role in shaping the new world order.

Even as the main elements of the new order begin to crystallize, their attendant uncertainties necessitate that we duly voice some of our primary concerns and desires regarding international relations in the post-cold-war era.

It is our firm belief that the socio-economic and political transformation the world is undergoing will not culminate in a better and safer world unless it is guided by the ideals and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and unless we acknowledge that, diverse as mankind is, its fundamental interests are common and indivisible.

Without our being complacent, it can be said that, with the ideological antagonism of the past now overcome, never before in the history of international relations has such a congenial atmosphere prevailed for collective action towards creating a secure and viable future for mankind.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

One positive development in this connection is that, increasingly, there is among States, large and small, a happy convergence of shared values and ideals for a better world. It is in this spirit that we should focus undivided attention on the problems confronting the world.

Potentially disruptive to the new world order and to the cohesion of nation States is the resurgence of the phenomenon of intolerance, which is assuming prominence in many parts of the globe. Intolerance, whether manifested through racism, religion or ethnicity, breeds discrimination and is a negation of civilized norms and a threat to world peace.

Optimistic as we are that a new world order will bring about an enlightened approach to inter-State relations, small States have no option but to continue to emphasize the centrality of the principle of sovereignty and equality of States.

Tendencies towards domination and hegemony are still a factor to reckon with, hence our concern with the issue of the security of small States. Equally, we cannot fail to register the lingering perception on the part of developing countries, particularly small States, that the post-cold-war era can potentially lead to their political and economic marginalization. We trust that a matter of such importance as this will evoke an appropriate response on the part of the international community in the period ahead.

The new world order we are striving to build will remain on a shaky pedestal unless it places at the centre issues relating to the dignity of the human person. Happily, there is already a global consensus acknowledging that democracy and respect for fundamental human rights are a starting-point for international stability and a foundation for a world free from national and regional conflicts. It is in this context that we hail the decisions of the

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

Assembly to convene in the not-too-distant future international conferences on human rights, on women and on development.

The clarion call of the moment is for countries of the world to create truly democratic societies. We note with satisfaction that many countries in Africa are increasingly embarking on that road.

In the case of Lesotho, arrangements are very advanced towards holding the first genuine democratic elections since Lesotho attained independence in 1966.

It may be recalled that the military assumed power in 1986 in order to restore peace, to foster national reconciliation and to set in motion arrangements for a return to democratic rule. We have pledged to return to the barracks and to hand the reins of power to a democratically-elected government. Our commitment in this regard is both unshakeable and irreversible. Furthermore, the military will not be a contestant at the forthcoming multiparty general election. Its primary role will be to ensure that the election is free and fair. To achieve maximum transparency, several countries as well as international organizations have already agreed to send observer missions to witness the process.

The cause of restoring democracy in Lesotho has been found worthy of material support and encouragement by many friendly countries, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Canada, Sweden, Denmark and Australia. For this we are profoundly thankful. In the same breath, we would also like to express our deep appreciation for the assistance and support received from the Commonwealth, the European Economic Community (EEC), and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In keeping with its resolution 46/137 on "Enhancing the effectiveness of the

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

principle of periodic and genuine elections", the United Nations has provided highly valuable assistance through the Geneva-based Centre for Human Rights.

It goes without saying that in the wider context of the democratization process, the holding of democratic elections is but the beginning. The vital test will be to sustain democratic rule. Newly-emerging democracies will have to contend with the challenges to stability brought about by poverty and underdevelopment. The efforts of many developed countries in nurturing the seed of democracy will need to be complemented by enhanced resource flows from developed countries to assist developing countries not only to escape from the vicious circle of underdevelopment, but also to institutionalize a culture of democracy.

We in Lesotho are about to hand over power to a civilian government against the background of serious socio-economic problems accentuated by a devastating drought engulfing the whole of the southern region. I express heartfelt thanks to all those who responded positively to the Geneva Pledging Conference organized in June by the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community to mobilize international assistance towards mitigating the plight faced by countries of the subregion.

We are happy to join many delegations in congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). Lesotho is in full agreement with the perceptions and conclusions set forth therein.

The stability of our subregion remains a source of concern. South Africa continues to be in the grip of violence. While we note that the parties concerned have agreed to resume talks, we urge the South African Government, the liberation movements and all other democratic forces to continue the

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process of negotiations leading to the creation of a new and democratic South Africa. Similarly, we encourage them to persevere in their efforts to find viable modalities for the cessation of violence.

We welcome the recent decision by the Security Council enabling the Secretary-General to monitor violence in South Africa and facilitate the restoration of negotiations. We equally appreciate the recent release of some political prisoners and hope that the remaining political prisoners will be released on schedule as agreed by the parties concerned.

Notwithstanding continuing initiatives by the OAU towards conflict management and resolution in Africa, many Africans continue to suffer as a result of internal strife and regional conflicts.

We are hopeful that the suffering in Mozambique and Angola will soon be brought to an end. We fully welcome the involvement of the United Nations in the ongoing process towards restoring normalcy, which will give the people of the two sister countries greater hope for the future.

The human suffering and political impasse in both Somalia and Liberia deserve urgent attention by the international community. The human tragedy unfolding in those countries is immeasurable. While commending the active role of the United Nations in the resolution of the conflicts as well as in addressing the humanitarian dimension, it appears necessary to extend that role to include the involvement of United Nations peace-keeping forces. We are equally saddened by the senseless carnage in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

The problem of Western Sahara is still with us notwithstanding preparations for the deployment of the United Nations Mission to supervise the proposed Western Sahara referendum. We appeal to both Morocco and the Polisario Front to co-operate fully with the efforts of the international community in resolving the question of Western Sahara.

Pursuant to the Madrid peace talks, we welcome the ongoing peace efforts regarding the Middle East question. Lesotho remains firm in its belief that there can never be a lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East unless Israel fully recognizes the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and withdraws from all occupied Arab territories. However, we are encouraged to note a promising change of attitude in Israel since the change of Government.

Security Council resolution 668 (1990) and the signing of the peace Treaty in October 1991 by all parties to the Cambodia conflict, as well as the joint statement of the leaders expressing full support for that Security Council resolution, gave hope that peace was in sight. We urge all parties fully to respect the peace accords, as well as to comply, without fail, with the terms of Security Council resolution 766 (1992).

It is our belief that world security cannot be assured through the threat or use of force or by stockpiles of dangerous weapons. We therefore recognize the validity of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping as viable constituents of the international security agenda.

We cannot lose sight of the now universally acknowledged linkage between peace, security and development. Peace is a fundamental element of human existence. It is a universal ideal, and its achievement a perpetual quest of mankind. On it depend our survival, advancement and happiness.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

With the demise of the bipolar structures, the whole world, particularly the developing world, had hoped for bright prospects of strengthening development co-operation through the release of financial, material and human resources hitherto tied up in military expenditures.

Regrettably, the issue of the peace dividend did not materialize as anticipated. Instead, the spectre of donor fatigue has contributed to the lessening of interest in bridging the economic gap between North and South. We believe that the only way out of this state of affairs is to reactivate the North-South dialogue in earnest.

The perenniel problem of external debt remains a constraint to our development efforts. The situation is further compounded by trends towards protectionism and other discriminatory policies in international trade against imports from developing countries.

We therefore urge the developed creditor countries to urgently strengthen and broaden initiatives towards debt relief. In good faith, they should also facilitate a speedy conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations in a balanced and equitable manner that will reflect the interests of the developing countries.

The convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio last June, presented a unique opportunity to us all to reaffirm our commitment to the preservation of the environment. Important international agreements were adopted. The major challenge before the international community is to fully honour and implement the commitments made. The provision of adequate financial and technological resources for the implementation of Agenda 21 is an imperative.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the important statement he has just made.

Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. BEN YAHIA (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset, I wish to greet this Assembly and to convey to it our esteem as well as Tunisia's appreciation for the United Nations' tireless efforts to realize the aspirations of mankind for peace, security and prosperity.

I should like to take this opportunity to repeat my warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over this session. We know that your skills will contribute to the success of our work. I should also like to command the positive role played by your predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi, representative of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose activities have extended the Arab and Muslim to the international level under the leadership of King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. Your predecessor made a major contribution to the work of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

I wish also to congratulate Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the new Secretary-General of our Organization and wish him every success in his mission. He has embarked on his work with his accustomed characteristic dynamism and determination, which augur well for our Organization's future.

I welcome the new Member States recently admitted to the Organization. No doubt, they will make a valuable contribution to the work of the international community in the service of security, peace and justice.

(Mr. Ben Yahia, Tunisia)

For a number of years now, the world has been undergoing radical changes whose effects are beginning to make themselves felt at the international level. Détente is starting to emerge within the community of nations, and to create a climate conducive to the advent of world peace and security and the attainment of the lofty objectives that inspired the establishment of the United Nations.

The international community has welcomed the dawning of a new era based on peace, security and the upholding of human rights in the wake of the ending of the cold war with its ideological conflicts that were the source of tensions and disputes in all parts of the world. Those changes show that the international community has begun to regain its self-confidence and to put its faith in concerted international action in the knowledge that international problems can be resolved only through the strict application of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which all Member States have undertaken to uphold.

(Mr. Ben Yahia, Tunisia)

Tunisia, in this new era continues to be devoted to the noble purposes and principles upon which the United Nations was founded, and, therefore, considers that the desired new world order must be forged, as of necessity, through a process of peaceful and lasting settling of conflicts and resolving disputes by dialogue and negotiation with a view to establishing peace and security in the world.

Despite the encouraging developments in international relations, the world today still faces major challenges in all fields and at all levels. We, therefore, must show realism and determination in facing up to those challenges within the context of the just and equitable application of international legality.

Consequently, it is the first duty of the international community to focus, without delay, on questions that threaten peace, on the basis of the norms of international law and the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter as well as on the methods of preventive diplomacy as set out by the Secretary-General in his "Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277).

The cause of the Palestinian people is one of the most important of these questions. This people has for too long been the victim of injustice, and it is time for it to exercise, like all other peoples, its right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State on its territory, in conformity with international legality and international instruments.

Proceeding from the stance of championing the rights of peoples and adhering to the tenets of international legality, Tunisia has supported the efforts of the United States of America, the Arab countries and the international community to hold a peace conference on the Middle East, just as it has supported every constructive effort aimed at settling this question on

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the basis of returning the occupied Arab territories, including Al Quds, and the exchange of land for peace pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

Tunisia has followed with interest the bilateral negotiations between the parties concerned, particularly Israel and the Palestinian delegation acting on the instructions of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It has also participated in the multilateral negotiations on the Middle East.

While reiterating its support for the peace process, Tunisia joins the international community in calling upon Israel to put an end to its policy of settlement which aims at changing the demographic and social structure of the occupied Arab territories, changing their Arab cultural identity and imposing a fait accompli, as it is this policy that poses a major obstacle to the achievement of peace in the region.

Tunisia has welcomed the positive developments witnessed by the people of South Africa in the direction of constitutional reform and the search for a formula that may lead to the emergence of a new, democratic society based on equal opportunity and the elimination of disparities. However, the halting negotiations between the authorities in Pretoria and the African National Congress of South Africa and the escalation of violence are cause for grave concern.

Tunisia again expresses the hope that the necessary conditions will be met for the resumption and continuation of negotiations and the establishment of a transitional Government to implement the desired political reforms with a view to establishing a just and egalitarian society and putting an end to all forms of racial discrimination and all types of violence. In this way, the people of South Africa will be able to exercise their legitimate rights,

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participate in bringing about the recovery of the African continent and contribute to the strengthening of peace in the world.

In this respect, we wish to express our highest regard for the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as those of the Organization of African Unity under the chairmanship of President Abdou Diouf with a view to reopening dialogue and putting an end to the use of violence as a means of settling disputes.

The developments that have taken place on the international scene have substantially contributed to the defining of the parameters of the new world order and highlighted the tendency to effectively implement the principles and achieve the goals of the United Nations Charter. This has given the Organization a prominent status in the international arena, imparted a great deal of effectiveness to its action and enabled it to move rapidly and effectively, whenever possible, to put out the fires of discord, settle conflicts and restore lasting peace.

Proceeding from this, Tunisia considers that the new world order cannot emerge and gain strength without the elimination of all sources of tension in the world.

Tunisia, while welcoming the start made in putting into effect principles that it has long upheld, notes with deep concern the emergence of new sources of tension in the world, particularly in the Arab Maghreb region, in Somalia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the exacerbation of the dispute between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates over the islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb.

As far as the Arab Maghreb region is concerned, the Arab Maghreb Union is entering its fourth year. In that short period, it has taken significant

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steps towards the establishment of its structures within the framework of rotation of its chairmanship between its member States. Nevertheless, certain difficulties exist and stand in the way of the Union. We are trying to overcome those difficulties and to find appropriate solutions to them. Among the difficulties is the crisis between Libya and certain Western countries. We hope a peaceful solution will be found for this dispute within the framework of international legality, particularly since Libya has accepted Security Council resolution 731 (1992). We hope that dialogue will be pursued with a view to finding a political solution that would be in the interest of the young Arab Maghreb Union and spare the region any escalation that may lead to instability.

Tunisia also wishes to voice its profound concern over the situation in the sister country of Somalia due to the famine, the prevalent violence and the devastating war that threatens Somalia's very existence. Tunisia urges the parties to the conflict to put an end to the bloodshed and hopes that they will try and find an appropriate solution to the crisis, through a balanced approach of dialogue and negotiation.

Despite its modest means, Tunisia has contributed to the humanitarian assistance extended to that sisterly country. In this respect, we wish to draw attention to the final document of the tenth summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the subject of Somalia and urge the international community to work for its implementation in order to put an end to the martyrdom of the Somali people.

While denouncing the deterioration of the situation and the continuation of acts of aggression, as well as the "ethnic cleansing" to which the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are being subjected, Tunisia considers that these

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inhuman acts perpetrated against the Bosnian people should inspire the international community to show more resolve and firmness in its actions so as to preserve the existence of that people and protect its rights.

Tunisia supports the Security Council resolutions calling for measures to protect the population and halt this savage aggression against the Bosnian people, convinced as it is that such actions constitute a breach of the rights of peoples and a flagrant violation of the values and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

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The escalation of violence is also illustrated elsewhere by Iran's military occupation of the islands of Abu Mousa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb, which belong to the United Arab Emirates. Proceeding from its adherence to the principles of the United Nations and tenets of international legality, which constitute an indivisible whole, Tunisia supports the United Arab Emirates' full and complete sovereignty over its territory, recalls the resolution adopted by the League of Arab States on this question, emphasizes the necessity of avoiding any act that would threaten the security of the Gulf region and calls for compliance with the principle of good-neighbourliness, for acting in accordance with international treaties and other instruments, and for resorting to the bodies that are competent to settle disputes of this kind.*

In the same vein, we wish to reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait, in accordance with international legality and also wish to voice our concern over the destiny of the fraternal Iraqi people, as well as for the territorial integrity of Iraq, which must be preserved. In this connection, we hope to see our brethren in the region in a position to treat the past as a closed issue, in consonance with the spirit of understanding and solidarity that has always inspired the Arab nation.

The new international order will not be able to take shape unless an end is put to the arms race, which constitutes a constant threat to international détente. Tunisia, which, since the Paris Conference, has made clear its position with regard to chemical weapons, welcomes the progress made towards general and complete disarmament, particularly with respect to weapons of mass destruction, which consume vast sums of money and huge resources. We also

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* Mr. Moumin (Comoros), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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welcome the current efforts to strengthen and consolidate the process. In this respect, the agreement on chemical weapons recently concluded in Geneva is a positive step towards disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security. However, the implementation of that agreement must go hand in hand with the elimination of other types of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, especially in such a sensitive region as the Middle East.

We see the new international order as one of freedom, democracy, and human rights, which are noble and universal values that are consonant with the ideals of the United Nations, to which the Tunisia of the new era subscribes. On the basis of this conviction, Tunisia is working to make those values a reality within the framework of a democratic process, the underlying foundations of which are the upholding of the rule of law and the functioning of the State through institutions based on respect for individual and collective freedoms within a tolerant and open civil society where justice, freedom, and equality prevail for all citizens and human rights are protected and promoted.

Tunisia is convinced that genuine democracy rejects anarchy, the pursuit of supremacy, and violence. Democracy is a civilizing value based on a sense of responsibility and self-denial within the framework of recognized moral and social principles. Nevertheless, the success of this process also depends on recognition, in the case of every country of that country's specific features, as well as its characteristic socio-economic and cultural conditions, which are the foundations of their identity.

Tunisia takes pride that it will host, next autumn, the conference organized by the United Nations on human rights in Africa as a prelude to the

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International Conference on Human Rights. We also take pride in the fact that our country has been chosen by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to host the Conference on human rights and education to be held next November.

Proceeding from the conviction that democracy and development are mutually complementary, Tunisia has given human rights their full meaning by extending them to the political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental spheres. In this respect, we see it as one of our first duties to improve the quality of life in a natural environment not threatened by desertification, pollution, or erosion. For this reason, Tunisia has decided to draw up an integrated national plan for the protection of the environment, and participated in the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where it put forward constructive proposals.

Tunisia regards the protection of human rights as a daily duty that it develops and strengthens in the interest of its citizens in order to ensure for them a life of stability and dignity within a framework of sustainable development. The protection of human rights, in our view, means reconciling the interests of the individual and those of the community, for the interests of individuals would lose all meaning if society were threatened by anarchy and instability as a result of extremism and terrorism, especially when the perpetrators employ violence and exploit religion for unstated ends.

The Tunisia of 7 November, being deeply attached to its Arab-Islamic identity, has always been one of the torchbearers of Islam and one of its largest bases. It therefore believes deeply in the message of openness, brotherhood, and coexistence preached by our Muslim religion and by the other

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revealed religions in general. Accordingly, concerned to prevent religion from being turned from its true path and to protect human rights and civil society from the actions of those who exploit religion in order to attain their unstated objectives, Tunisia has decided to set extremism and terrorism in their true context, and has done so in many regional bodies.

Tunisia believes that it is time to adopt a collective position regarding this phenomenon and to cooperate sincerely in order to isolate extremist and terrorist groups which hide behind religion, in order for us to protect the interests of our peoples and our States and create conditions that make it possible to address the real problems, face up to the challenges and protect religion from any attempt to exploit and manipulate it.

It is common knowledge that many countries continue to suffer from a difficult international economic situation that impedes their progress and development. These countries await with impatience the fruits of the new world order in the hope that this new era will be one not only of peace and stability, but also of development and economic and social prosperity.

Although peace-keeping is the main concern of the new world order, the fact remains that its viability will depend on its ability to assign to economic and social issues their full measure of importance and to establish just and equitable rules for international cooperation. For this reason, we believe that the international community is today called upon to realize the aspirations of our peoples regarding cooperation, solidarity, and the settlement of their basic problems. Thus, the new international order has a duty to reconsider the structure of the world economy with an eye to the general interest, without discrimination or exclusion.

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Given the exacerbation of the world economic crisis and its adverse effects on the process of development in the countries of the Third World despite the major efforts and immense sacrifices made by our peoples, it is essential that we put our heads together and try to find the best means of facing up to the economic problems of the world in an appropriate manner. The aim should be to enable our peoples to fully enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights and to make it possible for them to contribute to the democratization of our societies and the development of relations of understanding and friendship between peoples.

Moreover, we hope the wealthy countries will be convinced of the need to expand their cooperation and to change the way they deal with us economically. This would encourage us and show appreciation for our efforts and sacrifices in the drive to restructure our economies. What we are asking the developed nations to do is to renounce their protectionist policies against our exports, and to seek a solution to the debt problems.

While endorsing the Secretary-General's ideas in his "Agenda for Peace" wherein he calls for regional arrangements to contain crises in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, Tunisia will continue to contribute with all the means at its disposal to the strengthening of this process. It will do so in particular in the bodies of which it is a member, namely, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. We also hope that international economic issues will be accorded a larger share in the process of restructuring the United Nations, because of their effects on the future of peace in the world.

(Mr. Ben Yahia, Tunisia)

Tunisia is convinced that the United Nations has a decisive role to play in the process of development in the Third World, and hopes that the Organization will continue to play that role in order to help those countries, which still sorely need the support of the Organization, and its specialized agencies in finding appropriate solutions to the problems of indebtedness, deteriorating commodity prices, deteriorating terms of trade, drying up capital inflows to middle-income countries and the transfer of the wealth of developing countries to the rich creditor nations.

In this connection, Tunisia calls for a strengthening of trade in accordance with the international trade order which has emerged from the multipartite trade negotiations at the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as this would be the ideal framework for strengthening the efficacy of international trade. Tunisia also calls for more participation by the developing countries in the decision-making process relating to international trade.

Social questions today have assumed a higher position in the Organization's scale of priorities, particularly the issues of employment, health, education and the environment, which play a highly significant role in eliminating the causes of tension and in improving the quality of life for all.

While welcoming the high priority accorded to such issues, Tunisia calls for promoting the tendency further and for the allocation of more adequate financial resources that would make it possible to meet the needs of the peoples of the Third World and to enable them to exercise their natural rights to employment, education and health. Proceeding from this, Tunisia supports the proposal for convening a world summit meeting on development in 1995 on

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the occasion of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary, following the international Conference on Human Rights scheduled for next year, the Conference on Population and Development that would be held in 1994 and the Women's Conference in 1995.

The eyes of the peoples of the entire world are today turned towards the United Nations, which is the living conscience of mankind and the beacon of its hope for a better future.

Therefore, Tunisia has renewed its longstanding attachment to the Charter and the goals of the Organization. It has always supported the Organization's efforts and is determined to support its action to ensure that law, justice and peace will have the upper hand in the world. The best proof of the stance is, of course, my country's continued participation in the peace-keeping operations organized by the United Nations, in the Congo and Namibia, in the sixties and, recently, in Western Sahara, Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia.

We are convinced that the establishment and maintenance of peace depend on the intensification of peace-keeping operations whenever the need arises. In this connection, it may be necessary to conduct an in-depth study of the best means of tightening and supporting those operations while increasing the Organization's ability to continue to stage them successfully.

The ideas and proposals that were thrashed out in the summit meeting of the Security Council last January have highlighted the need to develop and maintain a balanced relationship between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Organization's Secretary-General, as well as for a strengthening of the role of the General Assembly, in the light of the

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important functions assigned to the Assembly under the Charter and in conformity with the new realities that have been created by the current developments in the international situation. The Security Council's role should be developed in consonance with those developments.

We consider that it is high time we considered collectively the representation of the international community in the Security Council in the light of the great responsibilities assigned to it in maintaining international peace and security.

In so doing, we shall have strengthened the democratic character of the organs of the United Nations in conformity with the new spirit of democracy now prevailing in the world. This will satisfy the yearnings of many peoples and will ensure for our Organization greater confidence and credibility in the eyes of international public opinion.

We are fully convinced that our Organization, by virtue of its great experience and influence, is capable of giving effect to this ambitious civilizing project and making a valuable contribution to the strengthening of cooperation among Member States within the framework of a new outlook that will open up promising vistas for mankind and give it renewed hope and confidence.

Tunisia has already put forward many ideas and proposals to bring about these new reforms and tendencies that, in our view, must shape international economic relations. On more than one occasion it has made appeals to this end, most significantly in the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from this very rostrum, for the conclusion of a covenant of peace and progress between the industrialized and the developing countries.

(Mr. Ben Yahia, Tunisia)

The constructive spirit prevailing in the work of this session once again confirms the determination of the United Nations to play to the full its assigned role in the international arena in the maintenance of peace and security in the world. We are convinced that the Organization will succeed in consolidating the achievements of mankind and in providing it with the opportunities it needs for progress and prosperity.

Mr. CHAMMAS (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Ganev of Bulgaria on his election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We are confident that he will conduct the work of the session wisely and effectively and we take satisfaction in the bonds of friendship and mutual cooperation between our two countries.

I should like on this occasion to pay tribute to Ambassador Samir Shihabi for the sagacious leadership and courage he demonstrated in presiding over the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. He indeed deserves our deep thanks and appreciation.

I have pleasure also in extending warm greetings to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. We commend the resolve and ability he has shown in steering the work of the Organization over the short period of time that has passed since the start of his mandate and his declared intent to make the United Nations more compatible with the political changes that have taken place in international politics and the resultant increasing demands upon the Organization in the areas of peace-keeping, peacemaking, development and humanitarian assistance.

I am duty bound to extend our esteem and appreciation also to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his able leadership of the Organization's work for 10 years and for the sincere concern he showed over the suffering of Lebanon during its protracted agony.

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

Lebanon, a founding Member of the United Nations, welcomes the new Member States and considers their membership to be an enhancement of the Organization's universality, credibility and significance.

Over the past few years, the world witnessed a series of historic events that have led to a fundamental transformation in international relations. With the collapse of ideological barriers, the cold war has come to an end and thus dialogue, cooperation and realism have taken the place of confrontation, alliances and mutual mistrust. New States have emerged, many political systems have changed, and some States have opted for more open economic policies.

Throughout the world, all of this has generated a feeling of movement and given rise to expectations and optimism. These changes and new realities have had a direct impact on the status of the United Nations and its role in dealing with regional and international problems as the atmosphere of dentente has created more and better opportunities for the Security Council to deal more effectively with world problems and to adopt resolutions and implement them. The increased need for the United Nations system and its mechanisms has necessitated the structural modernization of the Organization in order for it to improve its performance at all levels.

The dramatic transformations that have taken place in the world have provided humanity with an opportunity to tackle its economic and social problems and to move forward towards the building of a better world, based on a collective commitment to peace, interdependence in the face of crises and partnership in working for development and progress.

While the Middle East region still continues to suffer from its chronic problems, a gleam of hope has appeared in the midst of the world's changing

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

realities. A serious peace initiative has shaped up, starting with the convening in Madrid of a special peace conference on the Middle East on 30 October 1991, under the auspices of the United States of America and the then Soviet Union.

In response to the letter of invitation from the co-sponsors of the conference, and on the basis of the United States letter of assurances which specified the necessity of fully implementing Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and of fully respecting and preserving Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, Lebanon has participated in the peace conference wholeheartedly and with clear determination. By so doing, Lebanon has committed itself, irrevocably, to the pursuance of the peace process within the principles and parameters upon which it has been based and through which the process is expected to achieve its objectives, especially the objective of comprehensive, durable and just peace, and the settlement of the the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects and with all its complexities.

Lebanon cannot help but be involved in this process of comprehensive peace on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the land-for-peace formula. Given its history, cultural heritage and geographic location, Lebanon, since time immemorial, has played a major and outstanding role in the cultural development of this important region to which it belongs and of which it is an integral part. It influences what happens in the region and is greatly influenced thereby. Hence, Lebanon's complete solidarity with its Arab brethren and its involvement, side by side with them, in the search for real peace.

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

We must recall here that Lebanon has borne and continues to bear the consequences of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. Let me mention, in this context, a few of the major aspects:

First, the presence of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Lebanon. In this respect, let us reaffirm, once more, our total and absolute rejection of the settlement of Palestinians on the soil of Lebanon. This is against our national interest, on the one hand, and, on the other, contravenes the principle of self-determination.

Secondly, the Israeli attack against Beirut International Airport on 28 December 1968. Thirdly, the invasion of southern Lebanon by the Israeli army in 1978. Fourthly, the massive full-scale Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, which reached Beirut itself, the only Arab capital ever occupied by Israel. Fifthly, no less than 150,000 fatalities and more than 400,000 injured or disabled over the past 16 years of bloody events in Lebanon, in addition to the billions of dollars worth of material damage resulting from destruction and devastation - not to mention the human misery resulting from migration and displacement.

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

Sixthly, the continued occupation by Israel of parts of Lebanon's territory in the south and the western Bekaa. That occupation in itself, together with the attendant Israeli practices and acts of aggression, constitutes flagrant violations of the principles and norms of international legality.

Herein lies the importance of implementing Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories. Lebanon has always emphasized the need to implement that resolution through the mechanism referred to in Security Council resolution 426 (1978), as Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories would create the propitious conditions for Lebanon to regain its strength and stability, so that it may contribute fully and effectively to the peace proces and, subsequently, carry out faithfully and scrupulously the commitments resulting from that process.

We believe that if Israel were to allow the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to perform its significant role properly, as mandated by the Security Council, UNIFIL would be able to discharge its mandate more effectively and successfully.

To enable UNIFIL to do that would be to reaffirm and highlight the increasingly important role of the United Nations in peace-keeping. Hence our call for demonstrating the prime importance of the participation of the United Nations in the peace process as it is the accredited representative of international legality whose relevant resolutions constitute the very foundations of the peace process.

The Lebanese army which has been reorganized and regrouped on a sound and effective basis has regained its ability to perform its duty in extending the authority of the Lebanese State over our entire national territory, up to the internationally recognized Lebanese borders. The Lebanese authorities are

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

prepared to shoulder their full responsibilities with regard to the maintaining of law and order and ensuring that the south of the country becomes an oasis of peace and security under the rule of law and in cooperation with UNIFIL.

The Lebanese delegation to the peace conference has received assurances from the Israeli delegation in the name of its Government to the effect that Israel does not have any territorial ambitions or designs on the land and waters of Lebanon. This gives us hope that Israel will translate those assurances into concrete actions by withdrawing completely from all the Lebanese occupied territories.

Lebanon strongly believes in the right of all parties to mutual security, provided that the security of any one party is not achieved at the expense of another's.

Proceeding from the foregoing, we declare from this rostrum and before this Assembly that the Lebanese Government and people are fully committed to the peace process and are determined to go ahead, regardless of the difficulties. We shall spare no effort in ensuring success for the peace process so that it may achieve its lofty goals. We in Lebanon attach great importance to the peace talks and realize that their success will be in the interest of all. We are aware also that to proceed in the opposite direction will be a blunder for which the region and the whole world would pay very dearly indeed.

The Lebanese Government continues to address the tremendous problems and to face up to the challenges that confront Lebanon after years of devastating strife. It has taken major steps towards rebuilding its constitutional institutions in accordance with the Taif Agreement and, for the first time in 20 years, has organized national parliamentary elections.

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

The main task that now faces the Lebanese Government is that of rebuilding the infrastructure of basic services and the vital sectors of the economy. Our economic sectors still suffer from the destruction caused by war and invasion, and the Lebanese people continue to feel the horrendous effects of galloping inflation due to the decline in the purchasing power of the national currency. The State budget is in the grip of a huge deficit owing to the loss of basic sources of national income such as tourism and the service sector. Regional crises, the latest of which was that of the Gulf, have also had sharp negative repercussions on the country.

The Lebanese still await the honouring of regional and international promises of help in revitalizing their national economy. The delay in supporting the reconstruction and development efforts that are already under way is very regrettable, particularly since in previous years hundreds of millions of dollars were poured into Lebanon to fuel the devastating strife and keep its flames alive.

The revitalization of Lebanon's economy would be an excellent investment in the future of the region. Lebanon and the Lebanese have played a pioneering role in modernizing and developing the region, and they still have the dynamism and ambition to play anew that same constructive role.

At this critical juncture the Lebanese economy is in urgent need of foreign financial and technical assistance, whether from fraternal or other friendly countries or from United Nations agencies and other organizations. A quick and effective investment in the order of billions of dollars is needed. Lebanese laws and regulations ensure for foreign capital funds and investments a free and open working atmosphere, the same atmosphere that, previously, had made Lebanon an important business and financial centre which attracted international investments and financial establishments of all kinds.

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

We look forward to the establishment of the Arab and international fund for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon, as it represents the promised and effective initiative needed to revitalize the Lebanese economy and set it on course anew.

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

Despite the disappearance of a considerable number of international problems, a number of national problems have re-emerged to take their place after having remained dormant for half a century. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the resultant conflicts are prime examples. In this regard, we denounce and condemn the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina which targets that republic's very existence. This aggression has caused the death of tens of thousands of innocent victims and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. This tragedy requires decisive action on the part of the international community to stop the military operations, to preserve the independence and sovereignty of this young republic and to return all displaced persons to their homes and properties. We commend the humanitarian role of the United Nations Nations in providing relief assistance to the besieged towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the face of considerable difficulties and dangers.

Equally, we commend the sincere and persistent efforts made by the Organization and its specialized agencies to bring food supplies to the people of Somalia in their plight. We call upon the international community to redouble its efforts to put an end to the distressing human tragedy in that country.

Thus far, the world economic situation and the relations between the developed and developing countries have not been positively affected by détente or by the political changes that have taken place in the world. The problems of foreign debt, the shortfall in development assistance, the rise in interest rates and the continued trade barriers all constitute serious obstacles to development in the South, whereas the developing countries are in

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

urgent need for development if a decent standard of living were to be ensured for the overwhelming majority of mankind and if the prospects of world peace were to be guaranteed.

The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit last June highlighted the relationship between environment and development. There has been an increasing awareness over the past decades of the dangers that threaten the ecological balance and the future of life on the planet. The achievements of the summit were a promising start toward a series of wide ranging changes in the production and consumption patterns that countries must adopt with a view to avoiding climatic changes, depletion of the ozone layer, the spread of desertification, and air and water pollution as well as managing toxic wastes and radioactive materials. Here too, interdependence and shared responsibilities appear to be the only option available to us in our dealings with nature and in our attempts to achieve sustainable economic growth. While we welcome the resolutions adopted at the Rio Conference, we entertain the hope that the necessary funds will be made available to Agenda 21 for the 21st century, which will help ensure the well-being of future generations as well as the future of life on earth itself.

The Government of Lebanon continues to pursue its policy of eliminating the traces of the tragic and devastating period that engulfed the country. During this year, we have managed to put an end to a problem that was associated with the name of Lebanon: I refer to the question of hostage taking. This solution was achieved thanks to the praiseworthy efforts of the Secretary-General and his personal representative, Mr. Picco, and with the cooperation of the parties concerned in the region. Lebanon has always

(Mr. Chammas, Lebanon)

condemned this phenomenon, for it contradicts the basic principles of law and human rights. Such abnormal practices never served or sought to serve the interests of Lebanon. Indeed Lebanon has always been their victim.

For many years, the mention of Lebanon or "Lebanonization" evoked images of fragmentation, devastation and human misery. Today, however, despite all its difficulties and sufferings, Lebanon stands before the international community as an example of steadfastness, rebirth, creative coexistence, and diversity within unity. All of these qualities made Lebanon what it was in the past and what will make it what it will be in the future: an oasis of prosperity, openness and a beacon. This is our plan for the Lebanon of tomorrow. To realize it, we expect support and backing from our brethren in the region and from all of our friends in the world.

ADDRESS BY MR. DISMAS NSENGIYAREMYE, PRIME MINISTER OF THE RWANDESE REPUBLIC

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic.

Mr. Dismas Nsengiyaremye, Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.*

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic, His Excellency Dismas Nsengiyaremye, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

Mr. NSENGIYAREMYE (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): The forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly provides the democratic transitional Rwandese Government the welcome opportunity to hail the annual gathering for the conduct of international diplomacy, and thus to make its contribution to the discussions on peace, security and development in the world.

However, allow me, at the outset Sir, to express to you my warm congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Your election is confirmation of the esteem and respect you enjoy in the international community. You are a man of experience, dialogue and conviction and these outstanding qualities guarantee success for the work of this session of the Assembly.

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

The Rwandese delegation wishes to assure you, Sir, of our complete readiness to make a positive contribution to the success of this session.

Concern for effectiveness in the service of peace, justice and development was always the driving force behind your predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi. I should like to express to him our profound gratitude for his major contribution to the development of the United Nations.

May I also be permitted, on behalf of my delegation, to welcome very warmly the courageous and innovative initiatives that have been undertaken by our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for peace, justice and security and for international cooperation and the mutually supportive development of all members of the international community. Such initiatives are certainly intended to open up a new world political, economic, social and cultural order. This will involve creating international solidarity between the peoples and countries of the planet so that they can jointly achieve their common destiny in peace and justice.

In this regard, my country, Rwanda, is happy to note that between September 1990 and September 1992 the United Nations carried out important actions to improve international political and economic relations. Some particular achievements were: the Programme of Action for the Least Developing Countries for the 1990s, adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris from 3 to 14 September 1990; the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1991; a new partnership for sustainable development, advocated by the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which took place in Cartagena, Colombia from 8 to 25 February 1992; and Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

Conference on Environment and Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992.

This is a small sample of actions with the same goal: the progressive building of a world that is more united and more mutually supportive. However, it can be achieved only after the definitive elimination of totalitarian or autocratic regimes that hinder the flowering and development of peoples in many countries of the world. Therefore, the restoration of democracy and political pluralism are preconditions for the success of a new world political order.

That is why, on 10 June 1991, Rwanda took the firm decision to move from autocracy and a single-party system to democracy and political pluralism. Since that time 16 political parties have been officially registered, and five of them are represented in the Government of democratic transition, which I have had the honour to lead since 16 April 1992.

The current democratic process in Rwanda, although it has passed through a number of important stages and has reached the point of no return, is encountering some difficulties because of the existence of forces that are resistant to change. We think that this is the result of the fact that in politics, as in physics, as soon as forces of change are set in motion, the forces of inertia arise to counter them.

That is why the Government of transition has set as its major goal the task of putting democracy in the country on a firm footing.

To do so, it has decided to undertake in-depth reforms to transform Rwandese political life. Thus institutional reforms will be carried out to ensure the separation and independence of the three branches of civil power: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Furthermore, appropriate

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

machinery will be set up to allow the population to participate effectively in the country's administration. Therfore, the political, social and moral forces in our country have been invited to contribute to the conduct of the democratic process under way in Rwanda.

The process of democratizing Rwandese political life is also viewed as a solution to the war that has been going on in Rwanda since 1 October 1990. This unjust, fratricidal and costly war has no objective raison d'être. The Rwandese Government feels that there can be no military solution to this conflict; that is why it has committed itself to seeking a negotiated solution.

I should like to inform the international community of the efforts made by the multiparty Government of transition to end this conflict. These efforts have been directed on the one hand towards the Rwandese Patriotic Front, which began the war, and on the other to our neighbouring countries, with a view to normalizing our relations and to coordinating our actions aimed at restoring peace in the subregion of the Great Lakes countries. Within this framework, an agreement on mutual security cooperation was signed with Uganda on 8 August 1992.

The Government has resolutely committed itself to a frank and sincere dialogue with the Rwandese Patriotic Front. In this context, direct negotiations have been taking place in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, since 10 July 1992 with the participation of observers from Burundi, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Senegal, France, Belgium, Germany, the United States of America and the Organization of African Unity. The parties concerned would also like the United Nations to take part in the negotiations.

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

The first phase of these negotiations, which took place from 10 to 12 July 1992, ended with the signing of a cease-fire agreement between the two parties. There is reason to welcome the fact that this cease-fire has been respected by all sides in spite of some irregularities.

The second phase, which took place from 10 to 18 August 1992, brought about the signing of a protocol agreement for a government of law, a protocol defining the basic principles that are to govern political life in Rwanda: national unity, democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights.

The third phase of the negotiations, which took place from 7 to 17 September 1992, has just been suspended and will resume on 5 October 1992. None the less, the two parties have already taken another important step by agreeing to the existence and separation of the three powers: legislative, executive and judiciary. Let us recall that this third phase is devoted to definition of the machinery and procedures for power-sharing.

The Rwandese Government defends respect for the State institutions and agrees to the integration of the Rwandan Patriotic Front into those institutions as well as to the making of institutional arrangements to speed up the process of democratizing Rwandese political life and for favouring the effective participation of the political forces of the country in managing the State.

The work of this phase will resume on 5 October and we hope that at that time the two parties will show sufficient political open-mindedness and realism to find common ground quickly. Following that phase there is provision for a fourth one which will study the modalities for integrating the fighters of the Rwandan Patriotic Front into the Rwandese Army.

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

Over and above the efforts to end the war in Rwanda, which has been going on since 1 October 1990, Rwanda reiterates its firm will to find a just and lasting solution to the problem of its refugees.

To this end, the Rwandese Government reaffirms solemnly that the return of Rwandese refugees to their country is an inalienable right that no one can challenge. Actions to facilitate the welcoming of these refugees who opt for repatriation have been undertaken. Mention may be made in particular of the identification of reinstallation zones, the promulgation of a general amnesty law, and the sensitizing and educating of the population to welcome the returnees in a spirit of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

The Government of Rwanda has also decided to ensure diplomatic protection for Rwandese refugees who may have chosen to stay in host countries. These refugees will enjoy all the civil rights that are recognized for other Rwandese citizens.

The Government of Rwanda takes this opportunity to make another urgent appeal to the High Commissioner for Refugees and to the Organization of African Unity to accelerate the completion of the plan of action for the repatriation of Rwandese refugees and the holding of the donors' round table, which should take place before the end of this year.

The war in our country has entailed considerable economic, social and cultural losses. One of the unfortunate consequences of this war undoubtedly remains the tragic situation of displaced persons, who at present number more than 350,000. They are located in 20 camps, where dozens of them are dying every day from hunger, cold and poor hygiene. We take this opportunity to make an urgent appeal to the international community to come to the assistance

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

of these displaced persons. We expect this community to come to our assistance by providing food, tents, blankets and medicine. In monetary terms, what is needed to maintain these persons displaced as a result of war amounts to $30 million a year. Moreover, we are asking friendly countries that have always stood by us not to remain aloof but rather to give increased financial assistance for the rehabilitation of infrastructures and areas destroyed by war and also for economic recovery.

In terms of international trade, Rwanda has suffered heavy losses because of the closing of the Kigali-Mombasa via Kampala road. Current talks among the users of the north corridor are of great interest for Rwanda, which would like to see this road reopened as quickly as possible.

The Rwandese economy, like that of other developing countries, continues to feel the effects of world economic imbalances and the burden of debt which is still suffocating the economies of the poorest countries in the world.

The drop in world prices for coffee, which is the principal export product of Rwanda, and which went from $2.50 in 1986 to less than 60 cents from 1982 on, has caused a considerable drop in earnings for the Rwandese economy. As a result of this deplorable situation, the gross domestic product of Rwanda at first stagnated and then dropped while the balance-of-payments problem remained largely one of indebtedness and some development projects had to be stopped because there were no means for investment in them.

Despite these indicators which are not very encouraging, the Government has taken courageous measures to limit the losses: drastic reduction in public expenditures; credit restrictions; and the devaluation of the currency, which in two years lost more than half its value.

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

The Government of Rwanda expresses its gratitude to the friendly countries and international organizations which have been broadly contributing to the execution of our structural adjustment programme. The Government of Rwanda is also counting upon them to support the sectoral programmes for economic recovery that are under way in our country.

After this survey of the economic and political situation prevailing in our country, allow me now to take up some of the major international problems of the moment.

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

Before doing so, I should like, as other delegations have done here, to warmly welcome the new Members to the great family of the United Nations. We wholeheartedly congratulate them and we encourage them to work for the triumph of the noble ideals of the United Nations.

Mankind remains torn by bloody conflicts and wars that result from anachronistic situations of colonialism, oppression, racism and ideological intolerance. The seeds of blind violence are multiplying wherever the sovereignty of peoples and the territorial integrity of States are being undermined and wherever the dignity and fundamental rights of man are being trampled upon by totalitarian regimes.

In this context, the Rwandese delegation praises the untiring efforts of the United Nations to extinguish the flames in various hotbeds of tension and to put an end to murderous, fratricidal conflicts that occur in the North as well as in the South. In this respect, the Rwandese Government would like to congratulate the Secretary-General of our Organization for his remarkable contribution and for the ways and means he advocates in his "Agenda for Peace", which would favour preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building actions.

Rwanda also welcomes the initiative taken by the twenty-eighth Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which allowed the Security Council to give serious consideration to ways and means of controlling the outbreak of massacres in South Africa.

The Rwandese delegation hopes that dismantling the legal pillars of apartheid will quickly lead to the establishment of a multiracial and democratic South African society. It encourages the South African Government to conclude negotiations with the African National Congress and to set up a democratic Government that represents all the people of South Africa.

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

Rwanda is pleased at the resumption of peace negotiations in the Middle East. We encourage all the parties involved to cooperate in good faith so that that new diplomatic opportunity will be seized to the fullest in order to achieve a lasting peace. Against that background, the Rwandese Government pays tribute to the new Israeli Government's gesture of halting the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories.

The Rwandese Government also supports all efforts to restore peace in the Horn of Africa, Liberia and other regions of the world, in particular Lebanon, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The success of the commitment of the United Nations to the process of national reconciliation and democratization now under way in Central America reflects the renewed influence of our Organization in the management of crises and the seeking of negotiated solutions to local conflicts.

In addition, Rwanda notes with satisfaction the continuing dialogue between the parties directly involved in the conflict in Western Sahara. Hence Africa still hopes to see the organization of a referendum, under the auspices of the United Nations, on the future status of that Territory.

Rwanda welcomes the current restructuring of the United Nations system and the end of the cold war. We hope that disarmament will lead to a positive net transfer of resources to the South, where the struggle against poverty remains a constant challenge.

It is on this hopeful note that I should like once again to make an urgent appeal to the international community to give diplomatic support to the process of peace negotiations in Rwanda and to help, financially and materially, with the repatriation of Rwandese refugees. The active participation of the United Nations in the Arusha negotiations would be an

(Mr. Nsengiyaremye, Rwanda)

additional guarantee of the will of the international community to find a just, speedy and lasting solution to the Rwandese conflict. We also appeal to the international community to come to the assistance of the 350,000 displaced persons and to help in the reinvigoration of our economy.

For its part, the Rwandese Government is committed to carrying out our country's current democratization process until the establishment of a State founded on law where all Rwandese, whether they live in or out of the country, will have the right to exercise their civil rights freely and without any discrimination whatsoever and to participate actively in the management of public affairs.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Dismas Nsengiyaremye, Prime Minister of the Rwandese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.